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Fireworks Ban in City of Maple Valley **took effect December 15, 2016**

Background

In November 2015, the Maple Valley City Council asked its citizens for an advisory vote regarding the banning of fireworks. A majority of voters voted in favor of the ban. The Council followed the voters' direction and passed a City Ordinance making it illegal to sell, possess, purchase or discharge fireworks within the City limits of Maple Valley. By law, the Ordinance took one-year to take effect, which occurred on December 15th, 2016.

4th of July Public Display of Fireworks at Lake Wilderness Park

The City of Maple Valley's Community fireworks show at Lake Wilderness Park each 4th of July will continue, and we encourage our citizens, young and old, to come and enjoy this safe, family friendly event.

FAQ's (frequently asked questions)

- (Q) Does that mean no more fireworks, starting with this New Year's Eve?!
- (A) *Correct, as of about two weeks ago, December 15th to be specific, fireworks were banned inside the City limits of Maple Valley. Sales / possession / use of fireworks for the upcoming New Year's Eve is prohibited by law.*
- (Q) What is the penalty for having or using fireworks within the City limits, now that the law prohibits it?
- (A) *If they are consumer fireworks, the safe and sane variety, possession / use violations will be met with a citation and \$71.00 fine. The fine goes up to \$250.00 on the second violation, and subsequent offenses within a one-year period are charged as a criminal misdemeanor.*

- (Q) My neighbor pays no attention to the fireworks law, they light them off all year, especially when the Seahawks / Huskies / Cougars / Sounders are playing and they score. It's really annoying and upsetting. My neighborhood has senior citizens, war veterans with PTSD, pets and peace and quiet loving residents who are sensitive to the noise and tired of putting up with it. What can we do?
- (A) *If asking your neighbor directly doesn't work, then give Chief D.J. Nesel a call down at the Maple Valley Police Department (425) 413-5158. Why the Chief? Well, he's been successfully addressing individual fireworks complaints in our neighborhoods for the past two years and educating folks in the process. How? Well, if you are willing to identify the offender(s), the Chief can take it from there and will personally meet with the offender to explain how their misdeeds will land them in trouble, and usually more than they bargained for. He starts by explaining the City's fireworks law to them. However, the fireworks that the vast majority of our sports revelers are utilizing to display their enthusiasm after a score are not the consumer "safe and sane" type that are purchased at a legally licensed and permitted local fireworks stand, but rather are the type that are purchased from a location such as a nearby Indian Reservation. Many of these so-called "fireworks" that are purchased at these locations are actually considered "explosive devices" under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 70.74.180). If you leave the Reservation with these devices in your possession, you are subject to arrest. As a general rule, if the "fireworks" go flying up in the air and/or goes boom!!!, they are most likely illegal, and those persons in possession or use of said device(s) would be arrested and charged with a felony. Usually, once these facts are discussed with your neighbor, I can usually leave with a handshake and the problem is resolved. If the neighbor wants amnesty to turn-over their illegal fireworks to the Sheriff's Office Explosives Unit, that can always be arranged.*
- (Q) What if it's not fireworks that are plaguing my neighborhood each weekend during the various sporting events, but one of my neighbors is sounding off a siren, using an air horn or _____. (fill-in the blank with a loud noise).
- (A) *Great question, as some of our reformed weekend fireworks users have inquired about other ways to express themselves, i.e., a siren, air horn or similar, I have had to refer them to the City of Maple Valley's Noise Ordinance (MVMC 9.05.480). While the ordinance is rather lengthy, its General Prohibition states: It is unlawful for any person to cause, or for any person in possession of property to allow to originate from the property, sound that is a public disturbance noise. What is a public disturbance noise? Well, the ordinance makes it simple by saying that sounds which unreasonably disturb or interfere with the peace and comfort of owners or possessors of real property.*
- Bottom line, our residential neighborhoods here in Maple Valley are peaceful and quiet. When something disturbs the tranquility of the neighborhood, resident(s) have the right to complain and request that the noise be abated. The penalty for violating the noise ordinance....1st offense, citation \$71.00 fine; 2nd offense, citation \$250 fine; 3rd and subsequent offenses within one-year period, charged as criminal misdemeanor.*

If you have any additional questions regarding the new City of Maple Valley Fireworks Ordinance, or on any other matter the Maple Valley Police Department can assist you with, please call us at (425) 413-5158.